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ABSTRACT

This speech argues the need for higher education to respond to the challenge of diversity as well as the opportunity to create institutions wedded to the belief that multiculturalism and diversity are prerequisites for excellence in the 21st century in American society. It is noted that current educational programs, particularly in elementary through secondary school, are not serving all the students within the American educational system. It is argued that higher education institutions must create a sense of community that is conducive to education, retention, and success of all students, but there has been a failure to respond to the increasingly culturally diverse student population and the related need for minority faculty. Two challenges are proposed. The first is how higher education relates to the demographic shifts in the population, in light of the hysteria and emotion of the general society and the associated political interests. The second is how U.S. education in the K-12 and higher education systems, along with the professional fields of practice, cooperate and collaborate with local and state communities to provide relief to the public and the increasingly global community of the schools. Presented is a list of news media articles on diversity and multiculturalism. (GLR)

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DIVERSITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE NEXT DECADE

Presentation to
American Educational Research Association
San Francisco, CA
April 22, 1992

By Peter A. Dual, Ph.D., M.P.H.
Dean, College of Health and Human Services
San Diego State University, San Diego, CA

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Good afternoon. Thank you for that warm introduction. I am pleased to have the opportunity to address this session of the American Educational Research Association, "Evaluations of the University: Assessment of Quality, Excellence and Diversity."

The subject that I am presenting for your consideration this afternoon, "Diversity in Higher Education: Challenges and Opportunities for the Next Decade," highlights an option we have, as characterized by Professor Carlos Cortes of the University of California at Riverside. In quoting Nehru in a recent article, "Pluribus and Unum: Quest for Community Amidst Diversity," Dr. Cortes says: "Life is like a game of cards. The hand that is dealt you is determinism; the way you play it is free will." Cortes maintains that, while our diversity revolution provides a major element of determinism for our nation's future, the way we play it involves a great degree of free will. I submit to you that what we do with our free wills shall determine our quality of life and standard of living. Through education, the competitiveness of our work force and the future of our international leadership is at stake. Developing model programs to know, understand and serve diverse people and their cultures within the United States can be used to know and understand the cultures and people of other countries. All of us are aware from the current trade deficits, that one of the basic reasons we are behind in trade is that people in other cultures know us better than we know them.

President John Slaughter of Occidental College, a former director of the National Science Foundation and former President of the University of Maryland, has presented a series of speeches, charting the course to the year 2000, which outline the future of American higher education. Slaughter maintains that the future standing and evaluation of America's higher educational system will be based on the mutuality of **excellence and equity**. We must respond to the challenge for diversity, as well as the opportunity to create institutions wedded to the belief that multiculturalism and diversity are prerequisites for excellence in 21st

century American society. According to President Slaughter, "Diversity in higher education is that which occurs at the intersection of **quality and equality**. It is what results when co-equal emphasis is placed on excellence and equity."

In April of 1990, *Time* magazine frightened many in America by announcing on its cover, "America's Changing Colors--What Will the U.S. Be Like When Whites Are No Longer the Majority?" The article by William A. Henry implied a movement was developing to adapt to America's demographic shifts in population, a lowering of standards and social engineering which would threaten elementary students, denigrate standards of quality and create chaos for America's government and its institutions.

A most recent (April 13, 1992) edition of *Time* magazine contained an article on "Campus of the Future." The article projected that, by the year 2000, American colleges and universities will be lean and mean, service-oriented and science-minded, and **multicultural and increasingly diverse--if they intend to survive their fiscal agony.**

As with most popular media designed to inform and to sell magazines, the two years between the reports of *Time* distinguish the panic and emotion from a mature and reasoned view of human reactions to change. Our future in higher education and the K-12 level is predicated on access and quality.

According to the growth plan for the California State University System, by the year 2005, whites will constitute 39 percent of California's population; Hispanics, 39 percent; Asians, American Indians, Filipinos and Pacific Islanders combined, 13 percent; and African Americans, 9 percent.

Our major challenge in higher education is to face the fact that our current educational programs are not serving **all** of our students, in spite of a commitment made by the Congress of the United States almost 27 years ago:

> "By the enactment of the Higher Education Act of 1965, the Congress committed this nation to the goal of equal opportunity for higher education for all Americans, regardless of race or economic circumstance." While progress has been made, this goal, the key to virtually all managerial and professional jobs, remains for the disadvantaged student an unfulfilled promise.
> --Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, 1968, p.452.

The failure of America's K-12 educational system to provide all students, regardless of color or culture, with adequate skills to read, write, and count at grade level, now confronts higher education.

American public universities and colleges say that we need more money to offer quality and access. Our challenge is much more complex and intricate than simply money.

If we are successful in meeting our challenge, higher education must look at affecting changes in human relationships within the university and broader community.

According to a 1988 conference report of the American Council on Education titled, *Educating One Third of a Nation:*

> Changing campus climate means changing behaviors of people that are set by rites, rituals and rewards of the academy. Higher education today tends to discount minority achievement in admissions, the classroom, work opportunities, graduate fellowships, research and, most significantly, tenure decisions.

Charles Moody of the University of Michigan says that too often, the climate (and people infer by actions) that whatever minority candidates have **isn't** needed, and whatever they **didn't have** is exactly what is needed. Research conducted by minorities on their own communities is considered second-rate or out of the mainstream. This comment as quoted from the conference report by Dr. Samuel Proctor of Rutger's University was true in 1971, and remains true today.

We must create a sense of community on our college campuses conducive to the education, retention and success of all students. However, higher education has failed to respond to the needs of an increasingly culturally diverse student population and the related need for minority faculty. This void threatens all in the university community, and this increased diversity is equated with a loss of quality and lower standards.

Since 1987, we have experienced an increase in racial violence and intimidation on college campuses throughout America. The emotional response of some faculty and students toward people of color and difference, normally associated with uneducated blue-collar workers, finds expression in many ways, i.e., overt violence, slave auctions, vandalism, denigration, harassment and intimidation in speech, graffiti, etc.

The very standards of the university academy--objectivity, intellectual honesty, the importance of balanced debate, among others--are forgotten. In higher education as in all organizations, politically expedient use of process, policy and procedural mechanisms are often used in order to make decisions and judgements to appear objective and anonymous, but such decisions are no less biased in their ultimate effect on people defined as being different.

I am concerned about the future of human relations in America. Our desire and ability to understand and relate to each other, appreciating commonalities and respecting differences, has become an explosive vacuum. Yet, our ability to understand each other at home is directly related to our future in the global community. Three-quarters of our world are people of color with cultures different from our own.

Some time ago, in the Spring of 1991, President Bush spoke to the University of Michigan, and during that speech, the President of the United States criticized institutions of higher learning for promoting "civility." Why? Because some of these institutions are adopting disciplinary measures against acts of intolerance and abusive behavior, which they feel violates the basic values underlying their educational goals. Among these goals shared in most academies are: intellectual honesty; mutual respect; and freedom from discrimination, intimidation, harassment and violence against persons or property.

The efforts of some of the majority of U.S. citizens to be inclusive, and to protect and advocate civil treatment for minorities and others with differences, based on overt experiences of intolerance, violence and unrest while attempting to create a conducive environment for the matriculation and success of all students, is now labeled "intolerant"! In addition, these efforts are called "social engineering" and judged to be wrong!

Whatever happened to the meaningful phrases in our national tribute of allegiance:

> I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all!

And the opening line of a most beloved song:

> My country 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, to thee I sing.

Since an allegiance to our country is predicated on being indivisible, why is higher education responding to challenges of diversity and cries for protection and inclusiveness with contrived effort to divide our population by race?

In light of America's increasingly racial diversity, how, and by whom, will American students be educated to serve diverse communities? How will we be able to diversify our leadership ranks throughout education and the professions? To what extent will students be prepared, through our educational systems, to understand clearly the social, economic and cultural conditions which determine education and eventually health status and the manner in which these affect lifestyle, behavior, and community decision-making?

Are the topics of diversity and pluralism important to the public and all professions of practice that serve our society with dedication and commitment to improve the quality of life? To a large extent, the future of America, at home and abroad in an increasingly global community, depends upon how well we educate and integrate into the mainstream of our society, a growing class of previously under-represented citizens: people of color and culture difference.

I speak to you this morning as Dean of a College of Health and Human Services, a college of the professions in the applied arts and sciences in public health, nursing, social work, health science, gerontology, and language, speech and hearing disorders. All of these professions of practice and service to clients work through organizations and agencies that operate within a community of increasingly diverse citizens. Our society is in need of graduates in these programs who are capable of understanding the culture, lifestyle and behavior of citizens and the broader aspects of community. This understanding will lead to enhanced programs and services to the public, which will provide effective interventions for individuals and families, while also developing community partnerships and networks for service.

Of course, all of the demographic trends in our country have implications for state and local organizations and the people who work directly with societal problems. The ways in which our professions respond to this challenge and opportunity for service, both in the university professional schools and in the professional fields of practice, will determine the future health and standard of living in America.

The first part of our opportunity is how we relate to these demographic shifts in the population, in light of the hysteria and emotion of the general society and the associated political interests.

The second part of our challenge is how we, in the K–12 and higher education systems, along with the professional fields of practice, cooperate and collaborate with local and state communities to provide relief to the public and our increasingly global community.

I congratulate the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, which adopted standards on diversity in 1988, and proceeds to offer universities and colleges assistance and guidance to define their own approaches and definitions for the achievement of diversity outcomes in higher education.

Thank you so much for your time and attention.

NEWS MEDIA ARTICLES
DIVERSITY & MULTICULTURALISM
April, 1990 – May, 1991
Compiled by Dr. Peter A. Dual, Dean
College of Health and Human Services
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April 9, 1990, *Time. Cover Title:* ***"What Will the U.S. Be Like When Whites Are No Longer the Majority? America's Changing Colors."*** Article: **"Beyond the Melting Pot,"** Henry, William A., III.

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